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MACDI32
21 March 1973

MACV ESTIMATE OF ENEMY THREAT AND PROBABLE COURSES OF ACTION IN RVN DURING THE NEXT 90 DAYS

1. PURPOSE.

-- To assess the enemy threat and probable courses of action in RVN during the next 90 days.

2. ENEMY SITUATION

-- The estimated strength of enemy forces in RVN and contiguous threat areas is as follows:

Maneuver	Combat Spt	Admin Svc/ Guerrilla	Total
100,700	26,800	89,300	216,800

-- During January and February 1973, enemy losses exceeded infiltration by over 14,000 personnel.

-- Enemy maneuver divisions and independent regiments are all well below TOE strength.

-- The 1973 infiltration estimate contains over 54,000 personnel of which approximately 38,000 are infantry replacements.

-- In late 1972, and continuing into 1973, an unprecedented number of tanks, artillery, and AAA was detected infiltrating through Laos.

✓ -- None of this equipment had arrived in RVN before the ceasefire.

✓ -- Most of it is now in RVN or in contiguous border areas.

	Tanks	APCs	Artillery	AAA
--	314	27	173	146

-- The North Vietnamese are now resupplying their forces in the south and the level of truck traffic through the

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ARMY review(s) completed.

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Laos Pass areas is comparable in quantity to that noted in previous dry seasons.

-- Because enemy supply levels in RVN were at a very low level, they have not yet been able to stockpile supplies for a sustained offensive.

-- COSVN Directive 02/73 announced the enemy intention to wage a political struggle in South Vietnam, with military forces playing a secondary, support role.

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3. COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES IN RVN DURING NEXT 90 DAYS.

-- Enemy efforts in RVN always involve a blending of political and military activity. This activity constitutes a "one war" with the single goal of reunifying Vietnam under Communist control. Weather, the availability of secure lines of communication, and personnel and supply status are among the many factors which determine whether military or political actions dominate. Enemy capabilities include:

-- Withdraw from RVN - No indication.

-- Return to a primarily military campaign in the form of sustained countrywide offensive operations employing all available military and political assets.

-- Conduct a primarily political campaign while maintaining an aggressive defense of "liberated" areas and selectively using military force to support political operations and to expand area and population control.

4. ANALYSIS OF COURSES OF ACTION.

-- A return to mainforce warfare:

-- Might lead to a resumption of US bombing.

-- Probably would result in suspension of reconstruction aid to the DRV.

-- May not be possible due to dependence of the NVA on Red China and USSR for military support.

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-- A primarily political campaign:

  -- Would be less costly than mainforce warfare in terms of manpower and material.

  -- Allows the enemy time to rebuild military forces and reconstruct stockpiles for future use.

  -- Leaves the enemy the option for increasing the level of military operations sometime in the future.

-- The enemy has about 100,000 infantry personnel or about 40% of TOE, in RVN. The enemy would probably desire at least 70% TOE or 175,000 infantrymen before initiating a sustained countrywide offensive. About 25,000 infantrymen are in the infiltration pipeline with arrival dates in RVN through May, and approximately 8,000 released VC/NVA PWs are probably being used as fillers. Therefore, when the 1973 infiltration estimate reaches 92,000 to 112,000 personnel (depending on enemy losses) the enemy should have the infantry strength for a sustained countrywide offensive. The estimate now stands at approximately 55,000. Even if he uses trucks to move personnel through Laos and Cambodia, he cannot achieve the desired strength level during the next 90 days.

-- Enemy supply levels within RVN and contiguous border areas are severely depleted. It is very unlikely that the enemy can infiltrate sufficient supplies to sustain a general offensive.

-- Although the infiltrated armor and artillery provides significant combat power, it does not offset the personnel and supply shortages.

5. CONCLUSIONS.

-- Within the next 90 days:

  -- The enemy will not launch sustained countrywide offensive military operations.

  -- The enemy will conduct a primarily political campaign while maintaining an aggressive defense and selectively use offensive military operations to increase area and population control.

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1973 NVA INFILTRATION INTO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

1. PURPOSE.

-- This paper presents information regarding NVA infiltration into the Republic of Vietnam and Cambodia during 1973.

2. BACKGROUND.

-- The 1973 infiltration year actually started in late autumn 1972 during the Laotian dry season but at a time when infiltration groups departing NVN would arrive in the RVN and Cambodia during 1973.

-- The 1973 infiltration season has been characterized by the infiltration of a large number of armored vehicles, field artillery and AAA weapons.

3. INFILTRATION ACTIVITY.

-- Infiltration groups detected prior to mid-January consisted almost entirely of field artillery and AAA associated units ranging in size from 200-300 personnel. During this time, very few infantry replacement groups were noted, with the exception of those groups destined for the DMZ/MRTTH area.

-- At the present time, 173 artillery guns and 146 AAA weapons are estimated to have infiltrated southward, including at least 24X130MM guns destined for the COSVN area and 12X130MM guns to MR-5 (Incl #1). This will mark the first introduction of weapons of this caliber to the COSVN area.

-- Although no artillery or AAA infiltration groups have been detected destined for the DMZ/MRTTH area, these type units probably have moved directly across the DMZ outside of the infiltration system.

-- Most of the artillery and AAA has probably arrived in the RVN or in contiguous border areas.

-- When added to the artillery estimated to have been previously located in RVN, a total of more than 438 guns (252 field artillery, 186+ AAA) could now be present.

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-- During the same time frame that the artillery and AAA groups were infiltrating, armor groups were also detected moving southward in NVN.

  -- These groups were subsequently tracked across the NVN/Laos Passes in December and continued southward through the Laos Panhandle.

  -- A total of 22 groups with at least 341 armored vehicles have been detected infiltrating to the RVN this year (Incl #2).

  -- When added to those armored vehicles previously located in RVN, a total of 518 (422 tanks, 96 APCs) would result.

  -- As with the artillery and AAA groups, armor units for the DMZ/MRTTH area have probably moved to that area outside of the infiltration system.

  -- Most of the armor, with the exception of stragglers, is probably now at or near their destinations.

-- Beginning in mid-January, the first infantry replacement groups began entering the infiltration pipeline in significant numbers.

  -- Of the total infiltration estimate, approximately 38,000 personnel are considered to be infantry replacements.

  -- At the present time, approximately 25,000 personnel remain in the infiltration pipeline, the majority of which are infantry replacements destined for COSVN. These personnel will continue to arrive during April and May.

  -- At the present time, the MACV 1973 RVN and Cambodia infiltration estimate totals 54,500 personnel with 12,000 destined for the DMZ/MRTTH, 7,500 for MR-5, 11,700 for the B-3 Front and 23,300 for COSVN (Incl #3).

4. CONCLUSIONS.

-- The 1973 infiltration season is unprecedented in the number of tanks, artillery and AAA that have been detected infiltrating.

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-- At the present time, the majority of the tanks, artillery and AAA have probably arrived in the RVN or in contiguous border areas, providing the NVA with a greater heavy-weapons capability than they possessed last year, just prior to launching the spring offensive.

-- Infantry replacement arrivals, however, are only slightly higher than casualty rates being incurred by NVN units in the south, which leaves the majority of NVA units severely under strength.

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